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VIEWS OF DR. RIZAL, THE FILIPINO SCHOLAR, UPON
RACE DIFFERENCES.*

PROFESSOR BLUMENTRITT, the German ethnologist, was a friend of Dr. Rizal, the famous and lamented Filipino scholar and ethnologist, and after his death published an account of his life and studies in the *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* (Bd. X., Heft II.), together with his views upon the comparative intellectual endowments of the white and colored (Filipino) races. A translation of portions of that paper is presented here. It is a curious and pathetic spectacle which is presented in the sketch—that of a cultivated Filipino making comparative studies of himself and the domineering whites in order to discover the cause of their assumption of superiority, yet conscious all the while of the hopelessness of protesting against fate.

Incidentally the study is instructive as illustrating the natural bent of Filipinos for higher studies, a feature of their character which is ignored by the American newspaper writers, who have in mind, apparently, when speaking of education in the Philippines, only the elementary studies taught in the public schools of the United States.

The anniversary of the execution of Dr. Rizal is observed in the Philippines, both by the native public and in the schools, where the day is known as Rizal day. It is a singular fact, and perhaps one significant of some trait in the character of the race, that the national hero of the Tagals was neither a military man nor a politician, but a man of intellectual gifts, and a student, who devoted his talents to his country and became a martyr to its cause. [Tr.]

Professor Blumentritt writes as follows:

On December 30, 1896, the Spanish authorities in Manila shot to death the greatest son of the Philippines, Dr. José Rizal, ostensibly because he had been an instigator of the insurrection then in full blast in the archipelago. Dr. Rizal was a Tagal, born in Calamba, a small city in the province La Laguna de Bay in Luzon. He was originally intended for the priesthood, but his own tastes inclined him to medicine and he accordingly studied that science in Manila and Madrid, at which latter university he took the degree of doctor of medicine and philosophy. He continued his medical studies in Paris, Heidelberg, Leipzig and Berlin, and also devoted himself to linguistic and ethnographical investigations, being made in consequence a member of the

* Translated by R. L. Packard, Washington, D. C.

Anthropological Society of Berlin. Upon returning to his native land he was soon compelled to emigrate because his novel '*Noli me Tangere*'* had drawn upon him the unextinguishable hatred of the Old Spanish party. After a short sojourn in Japan and North America, he established himself in London where, under the guidance of Dr. Rost, he broadened his acquaintance with languages, and meanwhile edited the second edition of the well-known work of DeMorga upon the Philippines which was published in Paris.† In Biarritz, Paris, Ghent and Brussels he wrote his second political novel '*El Filibusterismo*.' He then returned to the East and practised medicine for some time in Hong Kong, from which city he removed to British Borneo with a view to establishing a Filipino farming colony there. He meanwhile obtained permission to visit his home again, but was arrested upon his arrival upon the charge that anti-Spanish writings had been found in his trunks at the Custom House. He was thereupon banished to Dapitan in the island of Mindanao, whence he could easily have made his escape, but in the full consciousness of innocence he did not hesitate to remain there in exile. When the insurrection of 1896 broke out he was immediately charged with instigating it, was brought to trial on this charge three times in five months, was acquitted twice, but the third time his unchristian enemies succeeded in their purpose of convicting him and he was condemned to death.

Rizal devoted himself particularly to the analysis of the sentiments with which whites and the colored races mutually regard each other. No one was so well qualified as he to study this question which is of such importance for folk-psychology, for he was himself of a colored race, had lived among his fellow countrymen at his own home, as well as among the whites, mixed bloods and other classes at Manila, and had besides come to know Hong Kong, Japan, Europe and the United States, and that in a thorough way and not as a mere tourist. His extensive acquaintance with languages opened for him the ethnological writings of all civilized nations, and his own penetrating intellect prevented him from remaining content with the surface of things. It should be said, however, that Rizal concerned himself wholly with the relations between the whites and the colored people of the Philippines because, as he explained, he knew nothing of the psychology of other colored races.

He said that when a boy he was deeply sensible that the Spaniards treated him with contemptuous disregard for the sole reason that he was a Filipino. From the moment when he discovered this attitude

* Published in an English translation in the United States under the title '*An Eagle Flight*.'

† De Morga was viceroy in Manila in 1598 and wrote a most valuable work upon the Philippines which was published in Mexico in 1609.

of theirs he endeavored to find out what moral right the Spaniards, and the whites generally, had to look down upon people who think as they do, study the same things they study, and have the same mental capacities they possess, simply because these people have a brown skin and stiff straight hair.

Europeans regard themselves as the sovereign masters of the earth, the only supporters of progress and culture and the sole legitimate species of the genus *Homo sapiens*, while they proclaim that all other races are inferior, by refusing to acknowledge their capability of acquiring European culture, so that, according to the European view, the colored races are varieties of the genus *Homo brutus*. Rizal then asked himself, Are these views just? He began asking this question when he was a school boy and at the same time began to answer it by observing his white fellow students closely while he studied his own mental processes and emotions in order to make comparisons. He soon remarked that, in school at least, no difference could be detected between the intellectual level of the whites and Filipinos. There were lazy and industrious, moral and immoral, dull and intelligent boys among the whites as well as among the Filipino scholars. Soon this study of race spurred him to exert himself to the utmost in his school studies and a kind of race rivalry took possession of him. He was overjoyed whenever he succeeded in solving a difficult problem which baffled his white companions. But he did not regard these events as personal successes so much as triumphs of his own collective people. Thus it was in school that he first became convinced that whites go through the same intellectual operations as Filipinos and—*ceteris paribus*—progress in the same way and to the same extent. From this observation he came to the conclusion that both whites and Filipinos have the same natural intellectual endowment.

In consequence of this conclusion there manifested itself in Rizal, as he himself avowed, a sort of national self-exaltation. He began to believe that the Tagals must stand higher intellectually than the Spaniards (the only whites he had known up to that time), and he used to like to tell how he came to this fallacious conclusion. In the first place, he said, in his school the whites received instruction in their own language while the Filipinos had to worry with a strange idiom in order to receive instruction which was given in it alone. The Filipinos therefore must be better endowed intellectually than the Spaniards, he inferred, since they not only kept up with the latter in their studies but even surpassed them, although handicapped by a different language. Still another observation caused him to disbelieve in the superiority of the European intelligence. He noticed that the Spaniards believed that the Filipinos looked up to them as beings of a superior nature and made of a finer clay than themselves. But Rizal knew very well that

the respectfulness which the Filipinos manifested towards the Spaniards did not proceed from self-depreciation, but was simply dictated by fear and self-interest. By fear, because they saw in the Spaniard their lord and master who oppressed them arbitrarily even if with good intentions; by self-interest, because they had observed that his pride of race lays the European open to flattery and that they could get large concessions from him by a little subserviency. The Filipinos do not, therefore, have any real respect for the European, but cringe and bow to him from interested motives alone. Behind his back they laugh at him, ridicule his presumption and regard themselves as in reality the shrewder of the two races. Because the Spaniards never divined the real sentiments of the Filipinos towards themselves, young Rizal felt justified in regarding them as inferior in intelligence to his own countrymen. But in later years he found it necessary to change this false impression of his youth, especially as he had found by his own personal experience how easy it is to draw mistaken conclusions about people of a different race from one's own. "Whenever," he used to say, "I came upon condemnation of my people by Europeans, either in conversation or in books, I recalled those foolish ideas of my youth, my indignation cooled, and I could smile and quote the French proverb '*tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*.'"

Dr. Rizal's sojourn in Spain opened to him a new world. His intellectual horizon began to widen with his new experiences. New ideas thronged in upon him. He came from a land which was the very home of bigotry, where the Spanish friar, the Spanish official and the Spanish soldier governed with absolute sway. But in Madrid he found the exact opposite of this repression. Free thinkers and atheists spoke freely, in disparaging terms, of religion and the church; the authority of the government he found to be at a minimum, while he not only saw liberals contending with the clerical party but he beheld with astonishment republicans and Carlists openly promoting the development of their political ideas.

Still greater was the influence upon him of his residence in France, Germany and England. In those countries he enlarged his scientific information, or it would be better, perhaps, to say that there the spirit of modern philology was revealed to him, and there he learned the meaning of the word ethnology.

The personal influence of the late Dr. Rost, of London, was most marked in the philological training of Dr. Rizal. His teachings and the study of the works of W. v. Humboldt, Jacquet and Professor H. Kern opened a new world for the Filipino scholar. He formed a plan to write a work upon the Tagalog verb, which he afterwards modified and, while in exile in Dapitan in Mindanao, he began to write a Tagalog grammar

in English and at the same time prepared an essay upon the allied elements in the Tagalog and Visayan languages. The former work he intended to dedicate to Professor Kern in the name of the Malay race, the latter he wished to inscribe to the memory of Dr. Rost. It was not granted to him to complete the manuscript of either, for he was interrupted in the midst of his work to be dragged about from tribunal to tribunal until his final sentence and death by public execution.

Fortunately his work upon the transcription of Tagalog remains to us, a translation having appeared in the *Bijdragen* of the Indian Institute. Unfortunately this work only increased the hatred of his political opponents, for the Spaniards were bitterly opposed to any independent work on the part of the Filipinos, being convinced that everything of the kind was merely a cloak for separatist views, and whoever was suspected of separatism in the Philippines was certain of meeting an unhappy fate.

Rizal, brought up among Spaniards, was no better instructed than they themselves in modern ethnology and, indeed, it was through Professor Blumentritt's instrumentality that his attention was first directed to the defects in his education in that direction, whereupon he began with ardor to enlarge his knowledge in comparative ethnology. The works upon general ethnography by Perschel, F. Müller, Waitz, Gerland and Ratzel, the ethnographical parallels of Andrée, Wilkin's works, the culture-historical publications of Lippert and Hellwald became at once the subject of his industrious and thorough study, a study, furthermore, which not only enlarged his knowledge but afforded him the consolation of the assurance that his people are not an anthropoid race as the Spaniards asserted, for he found that the faults and virtues of the Tagals are entirely human, and, moreover, he became convinced that the virtues and vices of any people are not mere peculiarities of race but are inherited qualities, qualities which become affected by climate and history.

At the same time he continued what he called his 'course in practical ethnology,' that is to say, he studied the life of the French and German peasantry because he thought that a peasantry preserves national and race peculiarities longer than the other classes of a people, and also because he believed that he ought to compare only the peasantry of Europe with his own countrymen because the latter are nearly all peasants. With this object in view he withdrew for weeks and months to some quiet village where he observed closely the daily life of the country people.

He summed up the results of his scientific and 'practical' studies in the following propositions:

- ✓ 1. The races of mankind differ in outward appearance and in the structure of the skeleton but not in their psychical qualities. The same

passions and pains affect the white, yellow, brown and black races; the same motives influence their action, only the form in which the emotions are expressed and the way the actions are directed are different. Neither is this particular form of conduct and expression constant with any race or people, but varies under the influence of the most diverse factors.

2. Races exist only for the anthropologists. For a student of the customs of a people there are only social strata, and it is the task of the ethnologist to separate and identify these strata. And just as we mark out the lines of stratification in the mountain ranges of a geological sketch so ought we to mark out the social strata of the human race. And just as there are mountains whose summits do not reach to the highest strata of the geological system, so there are many people who do not reach the highest social strata, while the lowest strata are common to all of them. Even in the old established civilization of France and Germany a great proportion of the population forms a class which is upon the same intellectual level with the majority of the Tagals, and is to be distinguished from them only by the color of the skin, clothing and language. But while mountains do not grow higher peoples do gradually grow up into the higher strata of civilization and this growth does not depend upon the intellectual capacity alone of a given people, but is also due, to some extent, to good fortune, and to other factors, some of which can be explained and others not.

3. Since not only the statesmen who conduct colonial affairs but scientific men as well maintain that there are races of limited intelligence who could never attain the height of European culture, the real explanation must be as follows: The higher intelligence may be compared to wealth—there are rich and poor peoples just as there are rich and poor individuals. The rich man who believes that he was born rich deceives himself. He came into the world as poor and naked as his slave, but he inherits the wealth which his parents earned. In the same way intelligence is inherited. Races which formerly found themselves compelled, by certain special conditions, to exercise their mental powers to an unusual extent, have naturally developed their intelligence to a higher degree than others, and they have bequeathed this intelligence to their descendants who, in turn, have increased it by further use. Europeans are rich in intelligence but the present inhabitants of Europe could not affirm, without presumption, that their ancestors were just as rich in intelligence at the start as they themselves are now. The Europeans have required centuries of strife and effort, of fortunate conjunctions, of the necessary liberty, of advantageous laws, and of individual leading minds, to enable them to bequeath their intellectual wealth to their present representatives. The

people who are so intelligent to-day have become so through a long process of transmission and struggle. History shows that the Romans thought no better of the Germans than the Spaniards do of the Tagals, and when Tacitus praises the Germans he does so in the same spirit of philosophical idealizing which we see in the followers of Rousseau who thought that their political ideal was realized in Tahiti.

✓ 4. The condemnatory criticism of the Filipino by Spaniards is easy to explain but appears not to be justified. Rizal demonstrates this in the following way: Weaklings do not emigrate to foreign lands but only men of energy who leave home already prejudiced against the colored races and reach their destination with the conviction, which is usually sanctioned by law, that they are called to rule the latter. If we remember, what few white men know, that the Filipinos fear the brutality of the whites, it is easy to explain why they make such a poor showing in works written by the latter while they themselves can not reply in print. If we consider, further, that the Filipinos with whom the whites have dealings belong, for the most part, to the lower strata of society, the opinions of them given by the whites have about the same value as that of an educated Tagal would have who should travel in Europe and judge all Germans and French by the dairy maids, porters, waiters and cabdrivers he might meet.

✓ 5. The misfortune of the Filipinos is in the color of their skin and in that alone. In Europe there are a great many persons who have risen from the lowest dregs of the populace to the highest offices and honors. Such people may be divided into two classes, those who accommodate themselves to their new position without pretensions, and whose origin is consequently not reckoned to them as a disgrace, but on the contrary they are respected as self-made men; and the conventional parvenus who are ridiculed and detested universally.

A Filipino would find himself ordinarily in the second of these two classes, no matter how noble his character or how perfect a gentleman he might be in his manners and conduct, because his origin is indelibly stamped upon his countenance, visible to all, a mark which always carries with it painful humiliations for the unfortunate native, since it forever exposes him to the prejudices of the whites. Everything he does is minutely criticised, a trifling error in etiquette which would be overlooked in a shoemaker's son who had acquired the title of baron, and which might easily happen to a pure-blooded descendant of the Montmorencys, in his case excites amusement, and you hear the remark 'What else can you expect? he is only a native.' But even if he does not infringe any of the rules of etiquette, and is besides an able lawyer or a skillful physician, his accomplishments are not taken as matters of course but he is regarded with a kind of good-natured surprise, a feeling much like the astonishment with which one regards



a well-trained dog in a circus, but never as a man of the same capabilities as a white man.

Another reason for the mean opinion in which the Filipinos have been held by the whites is found in the circumstance that in the tropics all the servants are colored. They have the defects of their social class and of servants everywhere. Now when a German housewife complains of her servants she does not extend their bad qualities to the whole German nation, but this is done unblushingly by Europeans who live in the tropics, and they never, apparently, feel any compunctions, but sleep the sleep of the just, undisturbed by conscience.

The merchants also have contributed to the unfavorable judgment of the Filipinos. Europeans come to the tropics in order to get rich as soon as possible, which can only be done by buying from the natives at astoundingly low rates. The latter, however, do not regard this proceeding as a really commercial one, but they believe that the whites are trying to cheat them, and they govern themselves accordingly by trying, on their side, to overreach the whites, while their dealings with one another are far more honorable. Consequently the Europeans call the natives liars and cheats while it never occurs to them that their own exploiting of the ignorance of the natives is a conscienceless proceeding, or rather they believe that, as whites, they are morally justified in dealing immorally with the natives, because the latter are colored.

Dr. Rizal finally came to think that he need no longer wonder at the prejudices of the whites against his people after he saw in Europe what unjustifiable prejudices European nations entertain against one another. He himself was always benevolent and moderate in his judgment of foreign peoples. His active and keen mind, his personal amiability, his politeness and manner as a man of the world, and his good and noble heart gained him friends everywhere, and therefore the tragic death of this intellectually distinguished and amiable man aroused general concern.

Rizal was an artist of delicate perceptions, a draughtsman and sculptor, as well as a scholar and ethnologist. Professor Blumentritt possesses three statues made by him of terra cotta, which might aptly serve as symbols of his life. One represents Prometheus bound; the second represents the victory of death over life, and this scene is imagined with peculiar originality; a skeleton in a monk's cowl bears in its arms the inanimate body of a young maiden. The third shows us a female form standing upon a death's head and holding a torch in her high uplifted hands. This is the triumph of knowledge, of the soul, over death.

Rizal, concludes Professor Blumentritt, was undoubtedly the most distinguished man not only of his own people but of the Malay race in general. His memory will never die in his fatherland. He never was an enemy of Spain.

WAR DEPARTMENT

BIOGRAPHY

OF

Dr. JOSE RIZAL,

distinguished and Talented Philippine Scholar and Patriot,
infamously shot in Manila on December 30, 1896.

In
Memoriam.

*Dies iræ,
December 30, 1896.*

Published in a Special Supplement for the
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Volume X, 1897,

BY

DR. FERDINAND BLUMENTRITT,
Regius Professor in the University of Leitmeritz, Austria.

Translated from the original German, with Notes and an Epilogue,

BY

HOWARD W. BRAY.

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